

[Firm fined after worker injured when pipe fell into trench and struck him](#)

An Essex company who are specialists in gas infrastructure have been fined after an employee suffered serious injury when a pipe fell into the trench he was working in and struck him.

Maidstone Crown Court heard how an employee of Forefront Utilities Limited had entered a trench in Rochester, Kent to connect gas pipes. The new pipes were rested on packing timber across the trench, but the weight caused the tarmac to give way. The pipe fell into the trench and struck the employee causing significant injury including a fractured spine. He is paralysed and has no feeling in his bowel.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the incident which occurred on 23 May 2014 found the method for jointing newly laid sections of pipe to previously laid pipe was unsafe.

Forefront Utilities Limited, of Stephenson Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, were found guilty of breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay costs of £56,686.

After the hearing HSE inspector Andrew Cousins said: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers in the safe system of working.

"If a suitable safe system of work had been in place prior to the incident, the life changing injuries sustained by the employee could have been prevented."

For further information on safety in construction visit:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/contractors.htm>

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to reduce work-related death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training; new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement. www.hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.